

JAN 21 1967

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'The Venetian Affair'

Vaughn Turns Up as CIA Agent

in Film at Loew's Palace

By SCOTT PRESTON

"The Venetian Affair" (at Lowe's Palace), stars Robert Vaughn as a former CIA agent turned newspaper photographer.

He's in Venice covering an international peace conference that has just been bombed by an American diplomat. A good start.

Out of the wreckage comes this nearly credible story, from the best-seller novel by Helen MacInnes.

It is Vaughn's first motion picture since he started "The Man From U.N.C.L.E." television series and pleasure to find that this newspaperman is no carbon copy of Napoleon Solo, as he so easily might have been.

Instead, our hero is a depressed, unshaven, sometimes clumsy operator who is mostly anxious to finish an unpleasant job. He drinks more than he should and shaves less than he should. A far cry from the dapper, self-assured swashbuckling Solo.

So far so good.

He is asked to pick up a report on the conference bombing, written by an elusive doctor (played by saturnine Boris Karloff) who is running for his life. This document is the key to the bombing — its *raison d'être* — and its exposure would put the United States in a very poor light.

Vaughn's pursuit of this paper is enlivened by shootings, beatings, and assorted tortures by the baddies and complicated



ELKE SOMMER AND ROBERT VAUGHN

by the CIA, which wants him to find his former wife (beautiful Elke Sommer) whose one-time spying stint for the Russians had cost him his job with that agency. This search results in more violence.

Karl Boehm plays a cool and unscrupulous villain, who chases Vaughn, fills him with drugs, and disposes of Elke. Happily this rascal meets a fragrant demise in a Venetian canal, amid orange peels, pizza, and coffee grounds.

Tedious speech is one of the things the characters have going against them — practically all the talk is a monotone, side-of-the-mouth manner reminiscent of Dragnet days. Altho this is suited to Vaughn's characterization—it gives him that depressing air, it doesn't sit well with the others.

It keeps the atmosphere properly somber. The violence is done with some subtlety. Realistic and fast.

Jerry Thorpe, who directed and co-produced this film, is an expert with thrills and chills.